

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SSC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 EB-07

EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 SAJ-01 EA-07 NEA-10 COME-00 STR-04 CIEP-01

CEA-01 /105 W

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O R 251628Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4310

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION USUN

USCINCEUR

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FR, PINT

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC AND HIS CABINET RESIGN

REF: PARIS 24530 (NOTAL)

1. SHORTLY BEFORE NOON TODAY PRIME MINISTER JACQUES CHIRAC PRESENTED THE RESIGNATION OF HIMSELF AND HIS CABINET. IN A CURT STATEMENT, REVELATORY OF THE INCREASINGLY STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING THAT HAVE DEVELOPED OVER THE PAST MONTHS, CHIRAC DECLARED AFTER THIS MORNING'S CABINET MEETING, "I DO NOT HAVE AT MY DISPOSAL THE MEANS THAT I CONSIDER NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT MY JOB AS PRIME MINISTER EFFECTIVELY. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, I HAVE DECIDED TO STEP DOWN."

2. AT SIX P.M., IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT RAYMOND BARRE, NAMED MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE IN LAST JANUARY'S CABINET SHAKEUP, WILL SUCCEED CHIRAC AT MATIGNON. BARRE, A TECHNOCRAT WITH NO DISTINCT POLITICAL AFFILIATION (ALTHOUGH WITH CLOSE GAULLIST CONNECTIONS), IS A FORMER EC VICE PRESIDENT FOR ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS (1967-72) AND HAS BEEN A PARTICIPANT IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, INCLUDING THE OECD KISSINGER GROWTH STUDY GROUP. SINCE LEAVING THE EC AND UNTIL HIS APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE, HE WAS COUNSELOR OF THE BANQUE DE FRANCE. HE IS KNOWN AS A "EUROPEANIST", WELL DISPOSED TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES (HE WAS A 1965 LEADER GRANTEE). BARRE HAS BEEN EXTREMELY CLOSE TO GISCARD, WHO BROUGHT HIM INTO THE CABINET IN JANUARY 1976 AND WHO USED HIM ON PREVIOUS DELICATE AND SENSITIVE NEGOTIATIONS (HE WORKED CLOSELY WITH FORMER TREASURY SECRETARY SCHULTZ IN SETTING UP THE 1975 RAMBOUILLET SUMMIT). IN THE PAST HE HAS DISAGREED WITH CERTAIN U.S. ECONOMIC MOVES SUCH AS DOLLAR DEVALUATIONS AND HAS CRITICIZED THE POWER THAT STATE AND LOCAL BODIES

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IN THE UNITED STATES HAVE OVER OFFICIAL U.S. LIBERAL TRADE POLICIES. BARRE IS MARRIED, HAS TWO SONS AND SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH.

3. THE DRAMATIC RESIGNATION OF CHIRAC'S CABINET SHOULD NOT OBSCURE THE FACT THAT GISCARD WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF FRANCE WITH A TERM RUNNING UNTIL 1981

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CEA-01 /105 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4311

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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AND CLEARLY INTENDS TO REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL THAT DATE. NOR SHOULD THE TONE OF CHIRAC'S PARTING WORDS MASK THE DETERMINATION OF THE PRESIDENT NOT TO LET HIMSELF BE BULLIED BY THE UDR. BARRE'S NOMINATION UNDERSCORES GISCARD'S DECISION TO RULE FROM THAT POLITICAL CENTER WHICH HE HAS BEEN DECLARING HIS GOAL EVER SINCE HIS 1974 ELECTION. ANY HOPE OF RULING IN THE LONG RUN WITH THE STILL EXISTING CENTER/RIGHT COALITION SEEMS DEFINITELY COMPROMISED BY BARRE'S NOMINATION. IN FACT BARRE FIRST ENTERED THE CHIRAC CABINET UNDER THE "PRESIDENTIAL-MAJORITY" LABEL, A LABEL THAT GISCARD WILL EVIDENTLY TRY TO PIN ON ALL MAJORITY CANDIDATES IN THE 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. THE CHOICE OF ECONOMICS EXPERT BARRE ALSO UNDERLINES GISCARD'S INTENTION TO TACKLE MORE VIGOROUSLY THE PROBLEMS OF INFLATION, UNEMPLOYMENT AND MONETARY STABILITY, WHICH ARE OF PRIMARY CONCERN TO MOST FRENCHMEN TODAY.

4. AS FOR JACQUES CHIRAC, IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT HE WILL EITHER REASSUME THE DIRECTION OF THE UDR OR, SHOULD HE BE REELECTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, TAKE OVER THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UDR GROUP THEREIN.

5. AT 8:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME THIS EVENING THE FRENCH PRESIDENT WILL MAKE A TELEVISED ADDRESS. EMBASSY WILL REPORT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THIS ADDRESS AND WILL SUPPLY BIOGRAPHIC AND FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE NEW CABINET IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW.

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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